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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6174  
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RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 4751  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 6777  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 9839  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 1752  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2130  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7820  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - PAKISTAN

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Most Wednesday morning papers led with updates on the search for two fishermen who went missing after their boat was hit by an MSDF vessel early Tuesday morning.

¶2. "Rough Road Ahead for New Pakistani Government" The liberal Asahi's chief Asia news writer contended (2/20): "The outcome of the Pakistani parliamentary elections, in which the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Q suffered a crushing defeat, was unexpected.... Considering the fact that the elections were carried out less than two months after the assassination of former Prime Minister Bhutto, it can be said that the nation had a free and peaceful vote. The international community has called on Pakistan to establish a stable democratic government. Democratization seems to have been advanced through the elections.... The elections attracted global attention, as the outcome will affect international security. International attention will shift to whether Pakistan can create a stable government that can deal with the U.S.-led war on terrorism. The U.S. had envisaged the creation of a stable government by forming a coalition between the ruling party and the opposition Pakistan People's Party. However, the defeat of the ruling party demonstrated the Pakistani people's distrust of President Musharraf and will likely make it difficult for the People's Party to form a coalition with its rival.... Democratization sometimes conflicts with stability in developing nations. A new Pakistani government will likely face difficult challenges."

13. "Who Will Control Pakistani Nukes?" The conservative Sankei's senior writer argued (2/20): "The Bush administration will face difficulties if the Musharraf administration collapses, given that Washington has been depending on President Musharraf's leadership in the war on terrorism. President Bush appears to have concluded that President Musharraf is the only person capable of controlling the Pakistani military, which possesses nuclear arms. Although the defeat of the ruling party in the recent parliamentary elections was expected, the U.S. will need to review its diplomacy toward Pakistan.... President Musharraf will likely seek a coalition with opposition parties. However, the Bush administration might look for and support a new moderate leader in the military. Control of Pakistan's nuclear arms is an issue that goes beyond that country and could affect the nuclear programs of North Korea, Iran, and Syria. If the pro-U.S. Musharraf loses power, those nations will likely learn lessons from his failure."

SCHIEFFER